



GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

JANUARY 2019 VOLUME 10 ISSUE 1

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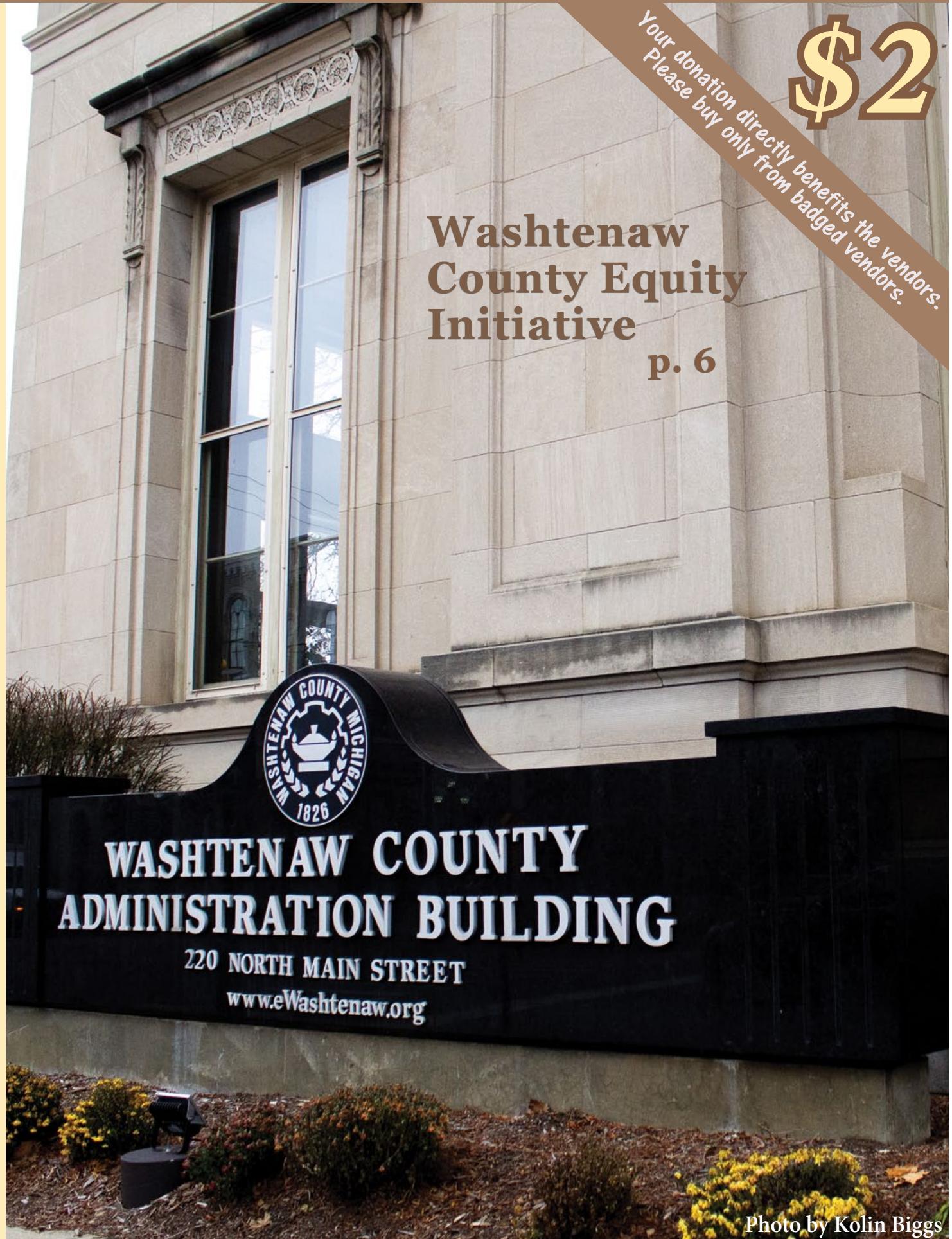


Photo by Kolin Biggs

OPINION

New initiatives address low-income housing shortage



by Susan Beckett
Publisher

It is well known that we in Washtenaw County, and the nation as a whole, do not have an adequate supply of affordable housing. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, nearly seven million extremely low-income households in the United States are unable to find rentals that meet their needs. Nearly 71 percent of extremely low-income households pay more than half their income on rent and utilities. In Michigan, there are fewer than 45 units of affordable housing for every 100 eligible households.

Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, which cover up to two-thirds of rent, have been the main source of assistance, but only one-quarter of those in need receive them. Also, if a Section 8 unit is lost due to eviction, the tenant is

banned for life from receiving another Section 8 voucher. To minimize evictions, Section 8 tenants can only lease places if their share of the rent is no more than 40 percent of their adjusted monthly income. Even so, many landlords in high-demand rental markets, knowing that Section 8 recipients' financial situations are often tenuous, choose not to rent to them. This leaves low-income renters clustered together in areas that often have sub-standard schools and services.

Opportunity Starts at Home, a nationwide coalition of low-income service providers, identified three national strategies to counter these problems:

1. Increase the number of Section 8 vouchers issued, especially those that expand access to strong neighborhoods.

2. Enlarge the supply of affordable housing, especially in strong neighborhoods, by increasing the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. (The Trust Fund is financed through fees imposed on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and distributed through block grants to the states.) Additional affordable housing is expected to alleviate market pressure and benefit middle income renters, too.

3. Stabilize households by providing emergency assistance of up to \$300 per month for six months, along with counseling, to avert housing instability and homelessness, which are known to adversely affect health, educational and behavioral outcomes. It is also much more cost-effective to prevent eviction than to provide homelessness services.

New initiatives to address these gaps are gearing up locally. MISSION, a local non-profit dedicated to serving the homeless community, has embarked on a project to create a tiny house community on their Stone School Rd. property. Their initial plans call for nine 120-square-foot units to house adults who are literally homeless but engaged with making the necessary changes to reverse their circumstances. The tiny houses will have electricity and heat but will share the bathroom, laundry, kitchen and living rooms at the conventional house located on the property within 20 feet of the tiny houses.

Residents will stay for up to two years, during which time they will be required to access available resources to achieve permanent supportive housing upon departure. During their stay, residents will be required to give back to their community by working to maintain and improve the grounds and operations. They will be required to live a drug and alcohol-free lifestyle inside the community and adhere to community rules. They will attend a weekly community meeting to discuss com-

munity issues and share information about their progress. Residents will be required to save a portion of their income during their stay so that when they leave, they will have made progress toward their individual financial goals. If the initial phase is successful, a substantial number of additional units will be built. The initial units are projected for habitation in December 2019.

Religious Action for Affordable Housing (RAAH), an Ann Arbor-based coalition of religious congregations, is financing a pilot landlord risk mitigation fund to encourage landlords to rent to Section 8 and other low-income renters who are perceived to be higher-risk. Local agencies trying to help people off the streets and into safe rental dwellings often find private landlords reluctant to take on tenants with a history of homelessness. Washtenaw Housing Alliance (WHA) and local affordable housing experts recognized the need to provide those landlords some assurance that their cooperation would not hurt their bottom line. The Community Risk Mitigation Fund, to which RAAH intends to contribute \$5,000, provides such assurance in the form of an account that can compensate landlords whose units may have been damaged by clients of local agencies. The fund will be administered by WHA and tapped into by area non-profits that administer Section 8 vouchers.

With the loss of the expected \$5 million contribution to the Housing Trust Fund from the sale of the downtown Ann Arbor Library Lot, private contributions and initiatives to make the most of resources are especially important.

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Media blitz for International Street Paper Vendor Appreciation Week

Celebrate Groundcover vendors
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INTERNATIONAL STREET PAPER VENDOR WEEK

February 4-11, 2019

Look for Groundcover News vendors Cindy G. and Zhandra S. in the video montage of vendors from around the world made by International Street Newspaper (ISNP) to celebrate International Street Paper Vendor Appreciation Week, February 4-11. Our focus this year, at the request of our vendors, will be a media blitz delivering the message that selling Groundcover News is legitimate work.

While we are sending media advisories to many outlets, we could use your help getting articles into a large

number of newsletters and magazines. Several of the Groundcover News vendors are making themselves available for interviews. Please email contact@groundcovernews.com for more information.

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LOOKING WITHIN

Seeing and being seen



by Rev Dr.
Martha Brunell
Groundcover
Contributor

During the depression he painted for the WPA (Works Progress Administration). After that he worked for Marvel comics, and in World War II, he created posters, booklets, maps and pictures for the Air Force.

In 1954 he entered the world of children's publishing and began illustrating the books of others. All those books featured only Caucasian people. No one of color was seen on a single page of any of them.

As we begin a new year in the wintry days of January, I'm lifting up an example of the essential power of that bearing witness to another.

Children's author and illustrator Ezra Jack Keats bore witness to others in 1962 and literally changed the face of children's literature in our country.

Keats was born Jacob Katz in March 1916 to Benjamin and Gussie, struggling Polish Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn. As he grew, his dream of being an artist seemed so out of reach in the midst of the poverty and discrimination he, his family and their neighbors knew on a daily basis. From childhood onward, he tasted the bitterness of exclusion.

"The Snowy Day" won the 1963 Caldecott Medal and in 1996 was listed

by the New York Public Library as one of the 100 most important children's books of the 20th century. Peter was present in six more of Keats' books. His works for children made visible a tapestry of faces including African American and Latino children and their families, homeless people and a collection of construction workers. His books made real for readers an urban context of street corners, front stoops, graffiti, chain-link fences

manholes, concrete, and neighborhood stores. Included in the paintings that became his book illustrations were collages composed of paper and fabric from countries around the world.

Ezra Jack Keats saw himself and others with boldness, courage and love. His artistic gifts threw open long-shut doors that had left others out in the land

"You and I know the longing to be seen, to be heard, to be recognized and to be acknowledged. ... Bearing witness to the presence of one another is a great and simple gift."

of invisibility. Keats embodied an intention that painter Vincent Van Gogh named late in the 19th century, the intention to offer up for others the beauty that he saw.

There is unlimited beauty in seeing others, in learning beside them, and in joining hands to form a beloved community with a panoramic view of who we are. If you have never read "The Snowy Day," consider doing so this month. Remain alert for your opportunities to say to another, especially a different other, "I see you."

Several years ago, the U.S. Postal Service issued a series of First-Class Forever stamps featuring illustrations from "The Snowy Day." I bought a few sheets of those stamps at one time. I still have three of the stamps in my purse. I will probably keep them forever. Whenever I hold them, I am grateful indeed to Ezra Jack Keats and I pause to consider who I'm seeing now.

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—MICAH 6:8

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Send resumes to contact@groundcovernews.com

Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

Restorative Justice: an approach to healing deep trauma

by Jon McDonough-Dumler
Groundcover Office Volunteer

Our communities are challenged today with the task of growing a communal soul big enough to heal the traumas afflicting us. Homelessness is a case of a deep trauma with many painful edges, including moral and spiritual ones. There are paths our community can take to help with healing the trauma we sometimes experience.

Community-wide efforts are essential to the healing transformation of victims of trauma as well as the community where it occurs. *The New York Times* columnist David Brooks argues that shared communal moments can become a “rite of passage for people coming out of prison, for forgiveness of a personal wrong, for people who felt they had come out the other side of trauma and abuse.”

The experiences of homelessness by Groundcover News vendors reveal that their trauma often can be traced back to the justice system. Having seen painful instances of this impact, the crucial question becomes: *What can our community do to help the justice system evolve towards a more healing and restorative approach to these traumas?*

An October 2018 conference at Washtenaw Community College presented the documentary film “Healing Justice” (a World Trust TV production by Dr. Shakti Butler) to examine the impacts of trauma arising through the justice system, and to explore steps at the local level that can mediate the sources and impacts of trauma. The Dispute Resolution Center and Friends of Restorative Justice sponsored the “Healing Justice” event that included a keynote presentation by Dr. Reuben Miller from the

University of Chicago. Dr. Miller shared insights from his research on incarceration, race, crime control, poverty and social welfare policy. Following the presentations participants engaged with a community panel that included the Honorable Judge Carol Kuhnke (Washtenaw County Trial Court), Debra Wright (Home of New Vision), Anna Lemler (Washtenaw County Racial Equity Office), DaQuann Harrison (Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice) and Dr. Reuben Miller. A follow-up panel discussion explored steps to address trauma, justice and healing.

The event explored the intersection of trauma and our justice system in three ways. First, how does the justice system recognize and address trauma in a way that restores healing and moves the community away from fear and inequity and towards equitable outcomes? Second, how has the justice system disproportionately impacted children and adults within communities of color, the poor and the marginalized? Finally, how can the justice system evolve to bring about more equitable outcomes through communal and personal healing for everyone?

In practice, how can the justice system help a person be whole enough to go from surviving to being able to expand and to make amends?

Discussion among the panel and participants focused on community-level practices using Restorative Justice (RJ), a form of mediated reconciliation. The reconciliation practices aim to resolve conflicts among people by engaging all the injured parties in mediated discussion and negotiation. Justice is achieved by promoting healing of trauma through identifying obligations and meeting needs of victims and offenders. By contrast, our current justice system

uses a retributive model that establishes blame/guilt by an adversarial process and administers punishment – one side wins while the other loses. Personal and communal healing is hardly ever addressed.

Specific practices and programs of RJ engage communities and individuals in three ways. The first pillar – Accountability – recognizes that when a person commits an offense, an obligation to both victims and the larger community is incurred.

Accountability means that the offender accepts responsibility and acts to repair the harm done. Equally important, the community takes on an obligation to everyone to seek appropriate resolutions to conflicts. The second pillar – Competency Development – provides resources (educational, vocational, social, civic, etc.) to offenders to enhance their ability to take on a productive role in society. The third pillar – Community Safety – promotes prevention and control of crime through community relationships that build the capacities of victims, schools, employers, community groups and social service agencies.

For example, these RJ practices are being applied by the Friends of Restorative Justice of Washtenaw County (FORJ), who are developing a model of circle-keeping – a cornerstone practice in restorative justice where participants speak and listen to one another in an atmosphere of safety, decorum and equality – with the women at the Huron Valley Correctional facility. According to Nancy Terhar and Carolyn Madden of FORJ, they are working “to pursue



The Restorative Justice model promotes the healing of trauma by identifying and meeting the needs of victims and offenders.

a balanced and restorative approach to crime and conflict that promotes justice, reparation and resolution for victims and the community, while also addressing accountability, personal development and reintegration of the offender into productive community life.”

By developing an array of RJ models of practice, FORJ seeks to serve different offender groups before, during and after incarceration. This most recent model of circle-keeping involved volunteers who participated in three circles to address Advocacy, Parole Readiness and Commutation, and Circle Leadership skills. The volunteers with the women at Huron Valley are further developing circle-keeping, focusing on self-reflection through examining personal lives and struggles.

Additional information and announcements of future activities are available at the FORJ website: www.friendsofrestorativejustice.org.

Moral Fusion Summit to challenge racial and economic disparities in Washtenaw County

by Laurie Wechter
Groundcover Contributor

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated as he was organizing the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) to address the evils of militarism, racism and economic injustice. Fifty years later, the Washtenaw County and Detroit Poor People's Campaigns joined 39 other states in the nationwide 40 Days of Action last spring, with weekly demonstrations in major cities and

capitals to promote the national “revolution of values” that Dr. King envisioned.

The Washtenaw County PPC unites individuals who have lived these injustices with those who run organizations, agencies, religious communities, and justice groups to challenge and reverse the ongoing damage from systemic racism, the war economy, economic inequality and ecological devastation.

The next phase of local action will be formulated through the **Moral Fusion Summit on Saturday, January 26, 2019** from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Brown Chapel AME, 1483 West Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti. Each participant will choose two different working groups, one in the morning and one after lunch. Each working group will look to discover the thematic needs emerging in Washtenaw County, the systemic barriers to filling those needs, and strategic actions to address those major barriers. The creation of this common agenda will help partic-

ipants to see the interconnectedness of various community concerns and identify short-term and long-term priorities.

The Moral Fusion Summit is co-sponsored by the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice, and WeROC. Attendance is free, but registration is required. For more information, visit the Facebook page, “Washtenaw County Poor People's Campaign,” or email ppc.washtenaw@gmail.com.

Boost your mood with free concerts

by Selena Grover
U-M Student Contributor

Music makes us happier people. It has been scientifically shown that listening to music releases dopamine, a chemical in the brain connected to feelings of well-being. Given this link between music and human happiness, it is important that music is accessible to all as a way to insert pleasure into our lives.

Fortunately in our community, opportunities for music appreciation abound – many of which cost you nothing. Notably, the U-M School of Music, Theatre, and Dance (SMTD) holds free concerts open to the public every

month. The variety and quality of these programs is astonishing, ranging from solo vocal and instrumental recitals, to early music period-instrument and jazz ensemble performances, to symphony orchestra concerts and full-scale opera productions. There is always available seating with no required reservations. The school does not discriminate based on race, gender or income, so all are welcome to attend.

See sidebar for a list of some free concerts in January. Visit the U-M SMTD website, smtd.umich.edu, for a complete calendar of events.



U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Select Public Performances

(all the following concerts take place at Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109)

SMTD Undergraduate Concerto Competition Finals
Wednesday January 9 8:00 p.m.

SMTD Graduate Concerto Competition Finals
Thursday January 10 8:00 p.m.

University Symphony Orchestra
Tuesday January 29 8:00 p.m.

University Philharmonic Orchestra
Thursday January 31 8:00 p.m.



UTILITIES RUNNING ON EMPTY?



There are programs that can help eligible Washtenaw County residents facing utility shut-off.

UTILITIES (DTE, Consumers Energy & Deliverable Fuels)

Through the Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), eligible Washtenaw County residents with past due utility bills (DTE, Consumers Energy, and Deliverable Fuels) can receive utility assistance help.

WAYS AGENCIES HELP:

- Funds to pay your heat-related utility bills.
- Personal action plan to make the future brighter.
- Access to other free Community Action programs.

FOR APPOINTMENTS, BRING:

- A Copy of Your Bill
- Applicant's Photo Identification & Social Security Card
- Income Verification For ALL Household Members (last 30 days)
- DHSS Decision Notice (Must apply for DHSS assistance)

To qualify for utility assistance, applicants must meet all program requirements.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for utility and deliverable fuel assistance, applicants must:

- Demonstrate that their primary source of home heating will be unavailable in the near future.
- Live at the billing or service address.
- Show proof remaining fuel supply is 25% or less (deliverable fuels only).
- Show that the assistance will resolve the problem.
- Be at or below 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Household Size & Maximum Annual Income

1 - \$17,603	2 - \$23,867	3 - \$30,131	4 - \$36,395
5 - \$42,659	6 - \$48,923	7 - \$55,187	8 - \$61,451

CONTACT A MEAP AGENCY

- Monroe County Opportunity Program:
Anna Grassley at 734.241.2775 ext. 202
- The Salvation Army:
Marla Conkin at 734.668.8353
- TrueNorth Community Services emPower:
Marissa Boerman 231.519.1453

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES

Size	Black and White	Color	Approx. Size (W x H)
Business card	\$49.95	\$65.95	3.5 x 2
1/8	\$89.95	\$129.95	5 x 3 or 2.5 x 6.5
1/6	\$129.95	\$165.95	5 x 4
1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 x 6.25
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	10.25 x 6.5 or 5 x 13
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10.25 x 13

PACKAGE PRICING

- Three Months/Three Issues: 15% off
- Six Months/Six Issues: 25% off
- Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off
- Additional 20% off ads with coupons

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Equity: from policy to implementation under women's watchful eyes



by Will Shakespeare
Groundcover Vendor #258

A person begins to die a slow death, the moments he/she keeps silent on things that matter.

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A healthy community is the one that meets the basic needs of its residents. More than a generation ago, Washtenaw County government officials were talking about equity solutions to the socio-economic gaps between Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. De-industrialization, plant closings and community abandonment of the 1980s and the post-war era had severe impacts in Ypsilanti. Women in leadership positions within county government have spurred their male colleagues to support an equity policy ordinance, along with a program office for effective implementation, evaluation and future adjustments.

Washtenaw County suffers from serious disparities in health, housing, income, employment, recreational and educational opportunities. In 2018, Washtenaw County was the top Michigan county in factors leading to healthy outcomes, yet it ranked fourth in actual outcomes because all people do not have access to the same opportunities. It ranks 81 out of 83 counties in income disparity within the county and Ann Arbor is the eighth most economically segregated city in the nation.

Health outcomes often reflect the economic disparities. The 2018 county rankings showed that "black babies in Washtenaw County are nearly twice as likely to be born at a low birth weight as white babies. Black children are nearly six times more likely and Hispanic children three times more likely to grow up in poverty than their white peers." The Washtenaw County Opportunity Index also showed that there is a nine-year difference in life expectancy between Ann Arbor's 48104 zip code and Ypsilanti's 48198 zip code. Furthermore, white people who live in Ann Arbor have a life expectancy of 86. Life expectancy for black people in Ann Arbor is 10 years shorter than their white counterparts.

Dr. Jessie Kimbrough Marshall, Medical Director of the Washtenaw Health Department, observed that "differences



Key members of the Equity Action/Implementation Team: Teresa Gillotti, Diane Heidt, Ellen Rabinowitz, Linda Edwards-Brown, Anna Lemler, Derrick Jackson. Photo: Kolin Biggs

in the social, economic and physical environment across Washtenaw County can help explain differences in Quality of Life (QOL) and health outcomes that we see among us."

The women of the Washtenaw County government did not keep silent. They wanted action now, and an equity policy initiative has come to fruition. On September 5, 2018, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners voted to formally adopt a Washtenaw County Equity Policy and fund a Racial Equity Department. Anna Lemler – Washtenaw County's Racial Analyst – and a Racial Equity Officer for whom a job was posted in December, will work with other County departments to uncover implicit bias in their behaviors and the institutional and structural racism reflected in their policies and practices.

"As of now, our focus is on setting up an office within the county that has resources, authority and capacity, in addition to being accessible for, and driven by, community members," said Lemler.

Conversations with impacted neighborhoods have been taking place so that resident concerns and observations are taken into account when policies and guidelines are formulated. Ellen Rabinowitz, Washtenaw Health Plan Executive Director and Washtenaw County Health Officer said, "We want to keep hearing from our community partners and community members. A significant part of our work is about listening – and being willing to change. It's about bringing community members' lived experiences into decision-making and to the allocation of the resources that are intended to help."

Linda Edwards-Brown, Washtenaw County Juvenile Court Administrator,

stated, "Community Partners and the community at-large should know that this equity policy ordinance is intended to be the beginning, not the end, of a bigger conversation about inequities in our community. They should also know that their voices are vital."

Numerous government agencies participate in the work to achieve equity. "We will strive to work together toward common goals that benefit all of our residents," said County Commissioner Felicia Brabec, who played a large role in getting the Equity Ordinance passed. "Breaking down silos, sharing data, programs and resources will help our community reach our collective goals sooner than if we do it one by one," said Brabec.

The Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) has played a large role in gathering and sharing the data that will be used as a baseline

and guide implementation of equity initiatives. Like the other women working on these initiatives, OCED Director Teresa Gillotti uses her personal experiences to heighten her sensitivity to discrimination. "I find that I'm constantly looking at any given room I'm in – a meeting, a forum, a committee, to see who is represented. How many women are in the room and able to impact decision-making – how many people of color? It's important to be aware of who is engaged and able to be in a position of providing input and making decisions. It's also important that we change policy and practice to make sure those spaces are as diverse and inclusive as possible," said Gillotti.

The Health Department is another key player in advancing the new policy. "Washtenaw County Health Department exists to protect health and to ensure all in our community have the opportunity to live a healthy life. This initiative is focused on racial equity. But, [community health and racial equity] do intersect," said Rabinowitz.

Rabinowitz continued, "I've watched women have fewer opportunities, get paid less. While this is not the same as experiencing racism, it does help you

see EQUITY, page 11



POLITICS

Lame-duck session threatens democracy and Great Lakes

by Olivia Perfetti
U-M Contributor

The November 6 midterm election had the highest voter turnout of any midterm since 18-year-olds like myself got the vote in 1971. Regardless of how you voted, this high degree of participation by millennials and other traditionally low-vote populations is worth celebrating. What has followed, however, shows the dark side of our electoral system – the lame-duck period.

An elected official is a "lame duck" when his or her successor has been elected but has not yet taken office. During Michigan's lame-duck session, Republican Governor Rick Snyder and the Michigan legislature scrambled to pass a number of bills before Democrats take the top state offices in January. These bills aimed to repeal paid sick leave for families, prevent an increase of the minimum wage, deregulate campaign finance, strip power from Proposals 2 (nonpartisan redistricting) and 3 (voting rights), prevent public employees from being paid while representing union members during the grievance process and reduce the number of wetlands protected in Michigan by about half a million acres of land.

In 2010, an Enbridge pipeline ruptured and spilled more than one million gallons of heavy crude oil into the Kalamazoo River. This oil spill was the most significant terrestrial spill in U.S. history, and has yet to be entirely remediated. Enbridge Energy ignored the signals of a spill and did not cease oil transport for 17 hours. Between 1999 and 2013, Enbridge Energy was responsible for 1,068 oil spills, leaking more than 7.4 million gallons of oil. Line 5 alone has spilled 29 times and has leaked more than 1.1 million gallons of oil since its construction.

You may have heard that Line 5 is the only source of propane for the Upper Peninsula and that decommissioning it would make gas unaffordable. This is not true: recent studies from London Economics International show that if Line 5 were shut down tomorrow,

the effect would be a two- to three-cent-per-gallon increase in Michigan gas prices and a five-cent-per-gallon increase in propane prices. Opponents of Governor Snyder's tunnel proposal say it only benefits Enbridge, a Canadian company, while posing a threat to Michigan residents and the Great Lakes.

Dr. David Schwab, an expert in hydrology modeling and Great Lakes ecosystems, stated that the Straits were "the worst possible place for an oil spill in the Great Lakes." There is clear evidence that Line 5 poses a dire threat to the health of the Great Lakes, which holds 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water, and to Michigan's economy, which relies on the fishing and recreation industries. Also at risk are more than 35 million people who receive

drinking water from the Great Lakes.

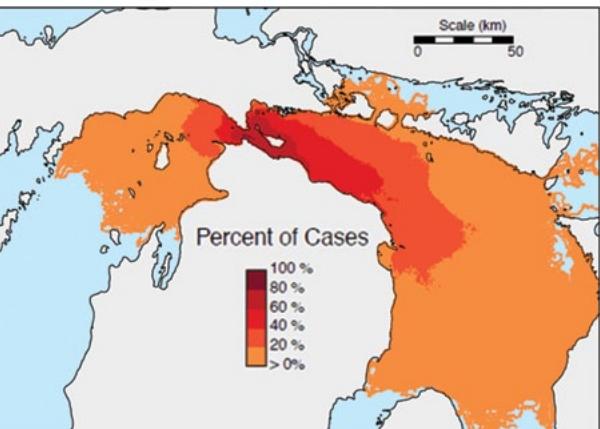
serve for at least six years. This allows Gov. Snyder to appoint board members who support Line 5 before he leaves office. SB 1197 is an example of a lame-duck bill that gives power to people who are not democratically elected and lack real accountability to constituents.

"I have a real objection to this type of significant action taking place during Lame Duck. It's just not a good way to draft thoughtful legislation. It's not a good way to make policy decisions, especially when it is so clear that the incoming administration has a very different view on how Line 5 should be handled. So I think that's really problematic, just in terms of the way we're crafting our laws and drafting our policies as a state," said Margrethe Kearney, senior attorney with the Environmental Law and Policy Center.

In late November, my classmate Logan Vear and I went to Lansing for "Lame Duck Lobby Day," which was hosted by Oil & Water Don't Mix, a campaign uniting dozens of organizations around the issue of protecting the Great Lakes from oil pollution. Over 100 everyday citizens lobbied Michigan legislators to oppose SB 1197. Among them were residents of Kalamazoo still recovering from the Enbridge oil spill in 2010, as well as UPers who drove for many hours just to talk to their legislators.

Leaders from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians and the Bay Mills Indian Community spoke about a lack of transparency during the making of the tunnel agreement. Brian Newland, Chairman of the Bay Mills Indian Community, said, "Lying to tribes is unfortunately a sad part of American history. But it should be [only] history. It's shameful that here in 2018, this administration, on its way out the door, is continuing to lie to the tribes of Michigan, and to lie to the taxpayers of Michigan about what this bill and what this deal really is."

William H. Gnodtke, former Chairman of the Mackinac Bridge Authority and Larry Bell, founder of Bell's Brewery and the Great Lakes Business Network passionately spoke out against the tunnel agreement. Other organizations, including Friends of Mackinac Bridge, Sierra Club, the League of Women's Voters, For the Love of Water, the National Wildlife Federation, the Straits of Mackinac Alliance, Clean Water Action



Above: A 2016 report by the U-M Water Center, "Statistical Analysis of Straits of Mackinac Line 5: Worst Case Spill Scenarios," shows the percent of cases in which oil is present in the Great Lakes ecosystem following a leak from Line 5.

and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters have also stated opposition to the bill.

The lobby day was not only inspiring but initially successful: it caused the original form of SB 1197 (which gave jurisdiction of the tunnel to the Mackinac Bridge Authority, an existing agency) to be abandoned. But the legislature passed a revised form in the Senate on December 10 and in the House on December 11. Governor Snyder signed the bill into law the next day.

For further information, visit [www.oilandwaterdontmix.org](http://oilandwaterdontmix.org).

More Lame Duck debacles

Several other lame-duck bills in Michigan also passed in late 2018 that arguably erode both the democratic process and the will of the people.



Two bills passed and signed delay the minimum wage increase from \$9.95 to \$12 an hour until 2030 instead of 2022, as passed earlier this year. They keep wages for tipped workers at 38 percent of the minimum wage and remove a provision to match annual increases in minimum wage to inflation. They also reduce employee sick time to a maximum of 40 hours per year and limit the paid sick leave requirement to companies with more than 50 employees.

POVERTY

When shall we overcome... homelessness?



by Elizabeth "Lit"
Kurtz
Groundcover
Vendor #159

While this month Americans across the nation celebrate the birth of the man whose message of peace ended the last legal strains of racial bondage in this country, the shackles of homelessness remain hidden from view with a nation remaining persistently oblivious to the crisis.

I recall a couple years back when large groups filed into Hill Auditorium to attend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. ceremony events.

"Groundcover News seeks to bridge the gap of misunderstanding between those who have no housing and those who are housed."

Church and school buses unloaded while ticket holders came from every direction towards the building. I stood near the entrance eager to distribute the latest issue of Groundcover News.

Yet, people from all races, nationalities, sexual orientations and economic strata passed up the offer to purchase the street paper, perhaps this community's only viable means of authentic engagement with members of the homeless population. Only a handful of people headed towards the auditorium recognized my plight. The rest passed by, ignoring, gazing (perhaps intentionally) into the distance.

The name of the paper, Groundcover News, is indicative of its purpose. The street paper is a business model that offers those who are literally and figuratively on the ground a means to reenter society in a dignified, self-sufficient manner. Like dozens of street papers around the world in different cities, Groundcover News seeks to bridge the gap of misunderstanding between those who have no housing and those who are housed.

As it stands now, no funding has sufficiently provided for the year-round emergency shelter which is the direst need for a person experiencing housing vulnerability. Inextricably linked to a person without adequate housing is hunger, which registers on the faces of citizens of the urban landscape something akin to the gaunt faces usually associated with the world's most materially impoverished regions.

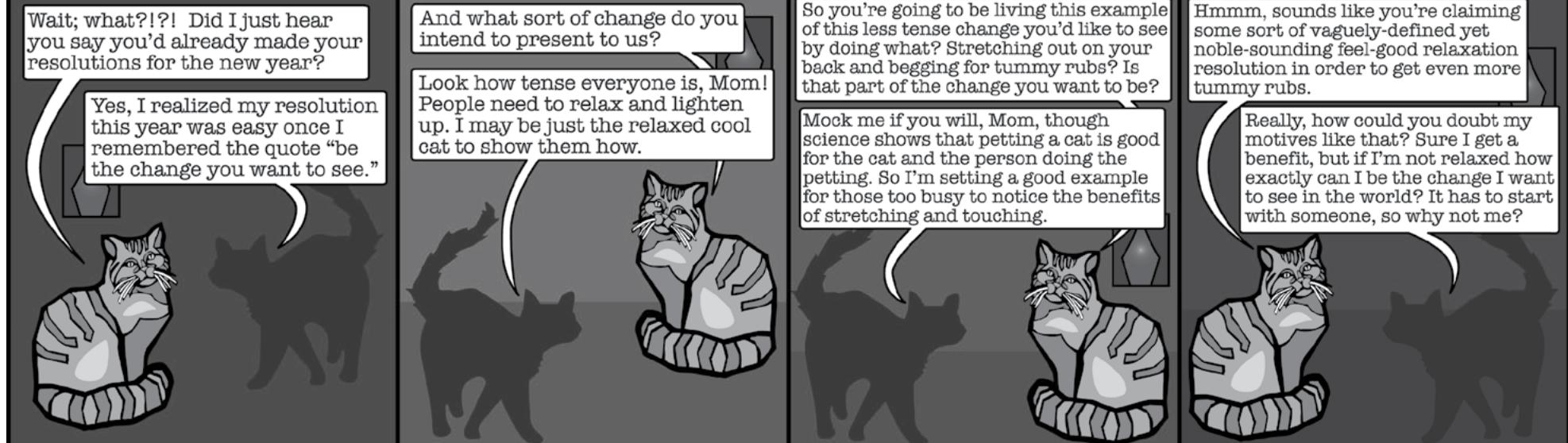
Our attempts to feed those who lack housing is certainly not aligned with our abundance. Hunger ministries strive to supplement the scarcity of nutrients the unhoused person lacks by providing green salads and nutritional supplements like Ensure. But from youth to the elderly, this population's diet falls far short of recommended standards.

While Dr. King promoted peace, we still live in a country where thousands of Americans suffer from what has been called the "violence of hunger."

It seems as though the spirit of the movement has receded further and further into the distance and that symbolism threatens to replace genuine concern for our suffering neighbors. The ubiquitous pattern of people walking by those who are suffering on the streets remains embedded in our culture, with thousands seeing no end in sight to their daily suffering.

While civil rights victories have expanded in recent decades to be more inclusive, unhoused citizens still lack

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YOU HEARD IT HERE

Washtenaw County Equity Initiative

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see it and begin to understand the pervasive impacts. Seeing and acknowledging that racism takes a toll on community members' health has been critical to the initiative and to the work of the Health Department. Then, we can begin to change how we make decisions, who makes them, what they consider, and, importantly, how those decisions impact community members."

The County is at the beginning of a long process for achieving equity. The women guiding the process shared thoughts about the journey and end-point.

"Some of our next steps will be to lay out a short-term and long-term vision for where we're going with the racial equity program. As part of that, we are hoping to set benchmarks to achieve the goal. It is too soon to report out, but we're hoping that tools like the Washtenaw Opportunity Index will help us use data to set the baseline, so we can track our progress over time. It is important to know that it took a long time to get here, and it will take a long-term commitment to truly move the needle toward racial equity," said Gillotti.

"Looking at the big picture, we will know that this equity policy program is successful when race and where one lives in Washtenaw County are no longer predictors of one's overall mental or physical health, life expectancy, employment, income or education," said Edwards-Brown.



County Commissioner Felicia Brabec played a large role in getting the Washtenaw County Equity Ordinance passed.

10 for \$10

Exploring Washtenaw County on the cheap

by Elizabeth Bauman, Groundcover Contributor

Looking for something to do that won't break the bank? Hoping to try something new? Wanting a little something sweet or savory? **10 for \$10** is here to provide you with low-cost or free things to do in Washtenaw County.

1. Enjoy an early morning walk on New Year's Day – you might be the only one up!

2. Learn to embroider at the Malletts Creek branch of the Ann Arbor library on January 8 from 6-8 p.m. Free with library card.

3. Share a pot of fine tea with a friend at Tea Haus at 204 N. Fourth Avenue or Arbor Teas at 1342 North Main Street to warm you up on a cold January day.

4. Reread one of your favorite books.

5. Browse through Cobblestone Rose at 101 S. Ann Arbor Street in Saline, a beautiful shop filled with home furnishings, gifts, and clothing for women.

6. Go sledding at Huron Hills Golf Course after a big snowfall. Fun for all ages.

7. Enjoy solitude at the West Lake Preserve in Chelsea, located on Waterloo Road just east of Werkner. You can meander through an old-growth forest and access the banks of West Lake.

8. Attend the U-M v. MSU women's basketball game at Crisler Center on January 27 at 2 p.m. Enjoy the skills of some of the best players in the country as you cheer on your favorite team.

9. Enjoy Taco Tuesday at many local restaurants in Washtenaw County. One good one to try... Chela's, with two locations in Ann Arbor and a new one opening in Dexter.

10. Get a quart of homemade soup for less than \$10 at The Produce Station at 629 S. State Street in Ann Arbor. The Sherried Mushroom is fabulous!

Want to contribute to **10 for \$10**? Please send ideas for inexpensive treasures and experiences in and around our vibrant community to:
submissions@groundcovernews.com.

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Fettuccine Alfredo

by Elizabeth Bauman

Groundcover Contributor

This simple dish of comfort food from "The Joy of Cooking" is delicious, with fresh fettuccine and authentic Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Ingredients

1 1/4 pounds fresh fettuccine, or 1 pound dried
1 stick butter
1 cup heavy cream
1 generous cup freshly grated cheese
Salt and pepper to taste



Directions

Bring 6 quarts water and 1 tablespoon salt to a rolling boil in a large pot. Add noodles and cook according to directions.

Melt butter in a large skillet over

medium heat. Add noodles along with cream and grated cheese. Toss over low heat until well-coated. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve immediately.

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